

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1083

INFO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19060

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TH

SUBJECT: NEW POLICE CHIEF APPOINTED

REF: A. BANGKOK 17922

### SUMMARY

1. ON SEPTEMBER 9 THAI CABINET APPOINTED POL LTG SISUK MAHINTHORATHEP AS THE NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO SUCCEED POL. GEN. POTE BEKANAN, WHO RETIRES ON OCTOBER 1. END SUMMARY.

2. SISUK IS A CAREER POLICE OFFICER WHO HAS WORKED HIS WAY THROUGH THE RANKS SINCE JOINING THE FORCE IN 1939. DURING MUCH OF HIS CAREER HE HAS BEEN CONCERNED WITH TRAINING. IN 1957 HE BECAME COMMANDANT OF THE POLICE CADET ACADEMY AND FROM 1960 TO 1971 HE HELD VARIOUS POSITIONS IN THE POLICE EDUCATION BUREAU, REACHING THE RANK OF COMMISSIONER. IN 1971 HE BECAME THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ADMINISTRATION AND IN 1973 THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION. AT AGE 58 HE IS THE SENIOR POLICE OFFICER IN THE DEPARTMENT AND SCHEDULED FOR RETIREMENT IN OCTOBER 1977.

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3. SISUK IS REVERED BY HIS SUBORDINATES AS A FATHER

FIGURE BECAUSE OF HIS GENTLENESS, SERENITY AND APPROACH-ABILITY. FROM INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY HE APPEARS TO BE APOLITICAL AND HONEST, IN SHARP CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSOR. HE IS NOT CONSIDERED A PARTICULARLY GOOD ADMINISTRATOR AND PEOPLE QUESTION WHETHER HE IS FORCEFUL OR TOUGH-MINDED ENOUGH TO BE AN EFFECTIVE POLICE CHIEF.

4. SISUK HAS STARTED OFF WITH A BANG, STATING HE WOULD GIVE PRIORITY TO BRINGING DOWN THE CRIME RATE AND IMPROVING WELFARE FOR LOW-RANKING POLICE. HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD MOVE AGAINST INEFFICIENT AND CORRUPT POLICE OFFICERS, STATING THAT QTE DISMISSAL WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO TRANSFERRING THEM TO HARASS PEOPLE IN REMOTE AREAS AS HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST. END QTE.

5. COMMENT: AS INDICATED IN THE REFERENCED CABLE THE EMBASSY BELIEVES SISUK TO BE AN INTERIM SELECTION WHILE THE POWER STRUGGLE CONTINUES OVER CONTROL OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. THE NEXT PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE IS THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF.

6. SOME REGARD THE APPOINTMENT OF SISUK AS A LEFT-HANDED VICTORY FOR PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT SINCE HIS SELECTION DENIED THE POSITION TO STRONGER, MORE POLITICAL CANDIDATES ALLIED WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAMAN AND TRA COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT. SISUK APPOINTMENT HAD FURTHER ADVANTAGE THAT HE WAS MOST SENIOR POLICE OFFICER BEING CONSIDERED FOR JOB. APPOINTMENT OF MORE JUNIOR OFFICER COULD HAVE CREATED FRICTION IN THAI POLICE RANKS AND APPOINTMENT OF AN ARMY OFFICER, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD BEEN ILL-RECEIVED BY POLICE.  
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